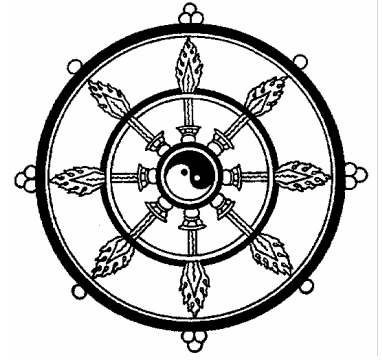


Dharmarakshita's "The Wheel of Sharp Weapons"

A Commentary by The Venerable Geshe Doga

Translated by Sandup Tsering

འོ་སྤྱོད་མཚོན་ཆ་འཁོར་ལོ།



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As usual, we will do a few minutes breathing meditation first. With meditation practice, we are trying to benefit the mind by cultivating clarity and to enjoy a sense of peace and comfort.

Everyone has a mind that accompanies his or her sense of 'I', whatever that type of mind may be. This strong feeling of 'I' tries to seek happiness and avoid suffering as much as possible. If the mind that always accompanies us enjoys some peace, happiness, and relaxation through meditation, we know from experience that naturally the 'I' or the person will also be happy.

At the same time this physical body, which is also part of our existence, is connected to this 'I' or self. So, if one's sense of 'I' is always peaceful and happy, this can be a cause for sound physical health. We must recognise that the purpose of doing meditation practice is to create the causes of inner peace and happiness. We need to be very clear about the benefits of meditation practice. When you have conviction about how meditation practice benefits your daily life, you will not see it as a boring chore; rather, you will show much enthusiasm and motivation. In fact, you will have a strong, positive motivation to do the practice.

You have the potential to bring happiness to our life and solve many of our problems through transforming your state of mind. If you think about what causes your day-to-day problems, you can see that the main cause is not external but internal - it is the undisciplined or untamed state of mind within you. This is the cause of our confusion and troubles. On the other hand, you can see that by controlling that untamed mind, you can actually reduce your problems, suffering, and confusion.

Even the Lord Buddha said that everyone should take responsibility for his or her own life, that you are your own guardian or protector. It is important to have a sense of self-responsibility. What is the responsibility or burden that you must take upon yourself? It is the burden of finding happiness and eliminating suffering in your life. What is the most effective means to bring about true happiness and eliminate unwanted experiences? The most effective means is that of cultivating positive states of mind, while diminishing negative ones.

Practised like this, meditation practice does not merely become just a few moments of experiencing inner peace, but also becomes a cause for us to develop wisdom. We can get to know the nature of the mind and the self, the true causes of the happiness (which we want), and the

way to eliminate suffering (which we do not want).

These are just a few points about the purpose of meditation practice to reflect upon. Now, we will begin the breathing meditation. First, try to check that your sitting posture is most comfortable, making sure that you feel relaxed. Then, try to bring the mind inward making sure that the mind is not running after external objects. It is important that you remove all distracting thoughts from the mind, and just let the mind remain within, without any disturbance from external objects. Having achieved this, you begin the breathing meditation, whereby you simply focus the mind on the in-breath and out-breath.

We will continue the discussion of the text *The Wheel of Sharp Weapons*. Verse 76 reads:

It's amazing how little endurance we have
To do meditation, and yet we pretend
To have gained special powers so others are fooled.

It is implied here that one should not lie to others about one's spiritual realisations or experiences. While it is easy to lie to and deceive others, it is not that easy to actually gain spiritual realisations or clairvoyant powers. It requires a lot of effort and takes a long time. You can only achieve such powers through gradual, progressive spiritual development.

For instance, to gain clairvoyant powers, the first realisation you must attain is the state of calm-abiding or single-pointed concentration. Yet, some people aiming for spiritual realisations may not even have enough endurance to undertake meditation practice for a year, let alone for a month. But someone may find it easy to pretend to others that they have gained realisations or clairvoyant powers, just to promote their self-interest. In fact, they are deceiving others.

Yet, what is the purpose of spiritual practice? It is to benefit other beings. Therefore, lying to others is the opposite of spiritual practice. Only after you have gained control of your own mind, and have subdued all negative states of mind within you, will it be possible to truly benefit others. We seek spiritual realisations and experiences for the purpose of benefiting others or for subduing one's own mental continuum - they not something to be displayed to others. If you really have gained some spiritual realisation, it is inappropriate and unwise to expose it to others, even just for your own benefit.

In the original verse, the exclamatory word 'amazing' is used. This word is used to convey a sense of surprise that someone with a weak mind and who does little spiritual practice could lie to others about having gained a high spiritual realisation.

The text continues:

We never catch up with the paths of deep wisdom,
Yet run here and there in needless great haste.

This shows how we tend to try to get things done as fast as possible. Thus, if our goal is to travel to some part of the world, we will try to do that as soon and as fast as possible. But - whatever the worldly aims we have that drive us to do things so fast and keep us so busy - according to this verse living such a fast-paced life has meaning or purpose. Rather, the verse implies that if there is anything we should achieve quickly, it is the state of complete enlightenment or Buddhahood - the ultimate spiritual goal. When we achieve this, we will be free of all faults, and will have accomplished all the excellent qualities. In other words, we should be hurrying towards complete enlightenment.

The lines continue:

Trample him, trample him, dance on the head
Of this treacherous concept of selfish concern.
Tear out the heart of this self-centre butcher
Who slaughters our chance to gain final release.

Here again we are reminded that the main cause of the above wrong actions that we do is this self-cherishing mind.

We leave tonight's teaching here. As usual, we'll do Buddha Shakyamuni's mantra, chanting it together seven times. Again, if people could adopt their meditation posture, relaxing both mind and body, and try to focus the mind on the mantra.

TAYATHA OM MUNI MUNI MAHA MUNIYE SOHA

*Transcribed from the tapes by Rita Feldmann
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